



www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge

Key Facts for Underwriters and Sponsors about the DARPA Grand Challenge

In March of 2004, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) will hold the DARPA Grand Challenge for autonomous robotic ground vehicles. Participants will develop vehicles that will navigate a course of approximately 300 miles between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and the team that most quickly completes the course in less than the prescribed time will receive a cash prize of \$1 million.

Teams are already hard at work preparing their vehicles, and as part of their preparations, they are seeking support to help underwrite the costs for building their vehicles and participating in the Grand Challenge. For potential sponsors, supporting a team offers the opportunity to be part of an historic event that will be closely followed by government and military leaders, and will gain widespread media coverage. Among the facts that reflect the importance and high profile of the Grand Challenge:

- DARPA is the prestigious research and development agency in DOD that has pioneered major technology and defense breakthroughs such as the Internet, Stealth aircraft, smart bombs and the pilotless Predator aircraft. Its name and its work are distinguished among leaders in technology, science, defense and academia.
- The Grand Challenge is a Congressionally mandated program that authorizes DARPA to conduct prize contests that reward advanced technology achievements. The intent of the Grand Challenge program is to encourage participation by nontraditional partners who may offer new, innovative ways of thinking that leads to breakthroughs in various scientific or technological challenges.
- The first such Grand Challenge is next year's autonomous robotic ground vehicle event between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. In the 2001 Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. Congress set a goal that by 2015, one-third of the operational ground combat vehicles will be unmanned, and the Grand Challenge help continue progress towards meeting that goal.
- The Grand Challenge program was established with support from the highest levels of DOD and the U.S. Congress, and the first one reflects the U.S. military's strong commitment to enhancing national security by fostering the development of robotics technology. This high-level interest means that the Grand Challenge for autonomous robotic ground vehicles will be closely watched by influential policymakers, members of the media, and opinion leaders in defense, technology, science and academia.
- The Grand Challenge has already gained nationwide media coverage in major print and broadcast outlets, and DARPA has received numerous inquiries from documentary producers about producing programming on the event. This media interest is bound to intensify as the Grand Challenge draws closer, culminating in a four-day series of media events before, during and after the event.
- America's heritage of ingenuity and innovation lives on in the DARPA Grand Challenge, and it will attract pioneers and trailblazers who embody that spirit.
- The Grand Challenge web site – www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge – offers continual updates on exciting news about the event that will not only interest teams, but also those who may want to support them.